

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 12, 2019

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

Thank you for your leadership of the Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and related Agencies (L-HHS) Appropriations Subcommittee and for your commitment to enhancing public health across the United States by combating infectious diseases. While we recognize that the Subcommittee faces many difficult funding decisions again this year, we respectfully urge you to fund the domestic tuberculosis (TB) program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at \$195.7 million for Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) to implement the interagency National Action Plan to Combat Multidrug-Resistant Tuberculosis, focus on addressing latent TB, and strengthen national, state, and local efforts to identify, treat, and prevent TB.

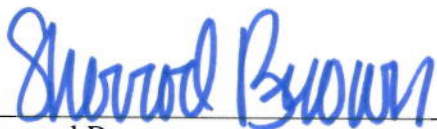
TB is the world's most deadly infectious disease, ranking ahead of HIV/AIDS and killing 1.6 million people annually. In the United States, TB remains a serious problem with all 50 states continuing to report cases annually. According to the CDC, there were an estimated 9,029 new cases of TB reported in the United States during 2018. In addition to these active cases, there are up to 13 million individuals in the U.S. with latent TB infection. The diagnosis and treatment of individuals with latent TB, who are at high risk of progression to active TB disease, could prevent an estimated 650,000 to 1,300,000 new cases of active TB. Furthermore, between 2005 and 2015, there were 1,195 cases of multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) and 31 cases of extensively drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB) reported in the United States. In 2017, the CDC estimated that the cost of treating a single patient with MDR-TB in the United States averaged \$164,000, and the average cost of treating a patient with XDR-TB was even higher at \$526,000, compared with \$19,000 to treat a patient with drug-susceptible TB. The CDC also estimated that the costs resulting from all forms of TB in the US totaled over \$460 million in 2017.

While the United States continues to make advances toward TB control, the President's budget highlights that progress to reduce the number of new TB infections has slowed and recognizes the importance of making TB elimination a priority. New and expanded approaches in surveillance and control will be required to achieve TB elimination in the United States. Support for the CDC's Division of TB Elimination (DTBE), whose mission is to promote health and quality of life by preventing, controlling, and eventually eliminating tuberculosis in the United States, is crucial for moving forward on the path to TB elimination. The DTBE has received flat funding since FY12, which has resulted in stagnant numbers of TB cases and rates in the past three years, and the rise of deadlier drug-resistant forms of TB.

In an effort to address the public health threat of drug-resistant TB, the United States launched its National Action Plan to Combat MDR-TB (National Action Plan) in December 2015. This comprehensive plan is designed to address MDR-TB in the U.S. and abroad and help accelerate research and development for new TB diagnostics and treatments. Implementation of the National Action Plan would allow for significant progress towards the goal of TB elimination within the United States. To ensure that the National Action Plan is successful, it is imperative to adequately fund the Agencies and programs responsible for administering this plan.

We recognize your commitment to careful consideration of the many domestic, health, labor, and education programs that require assistance in FY19, and thank you for your continued leadership. We urge you to make eliminating TB in the U.S. a top priority for your FY20 appropriations bill by funding the CDC's domestic TB program at \$195.7 million in FY20 to support the full implementation of the National Action Plan, focus on addressing latent TB, and strengthen national, state and local efforts to identify, treat, and prevent TB.

Sincerely,



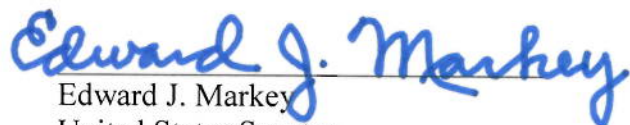
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



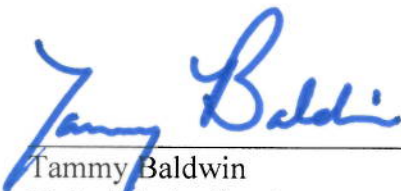
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



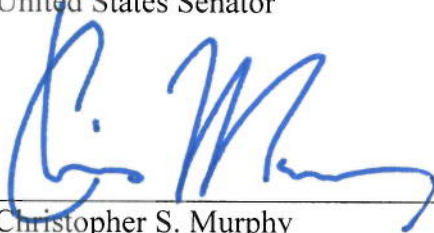
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



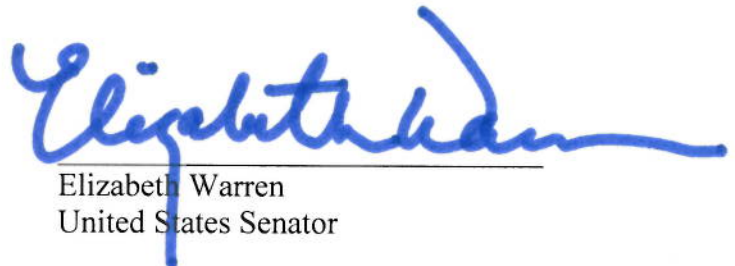
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



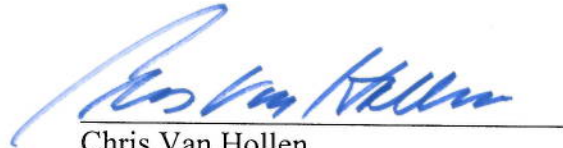
Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



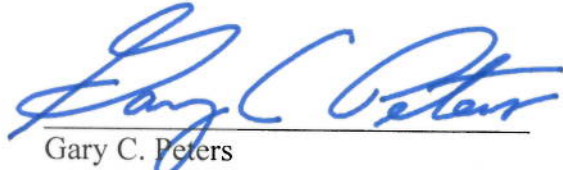
Robert Menendez
United States Senator



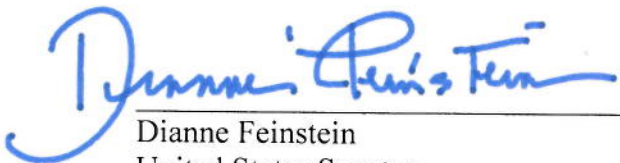
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



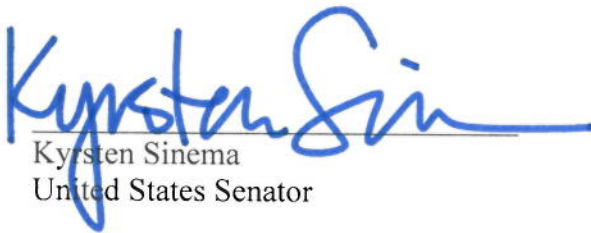
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



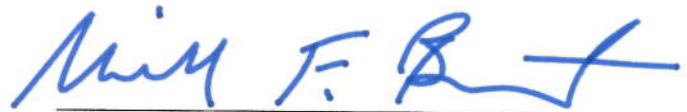
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
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